



Ivan Iwannado



Ivan Iwannado knows what he wants to do, but like most of us he'll take a while to figure out how to do it. Learn from his mistakes

THIS MONTH:

IVAN SAVES ENERGY

Ivan Iwannado was eating breakfast the other day when his electricity and gas bills arrived, and he nearly choked on his cornflakes. The amount looked like the national debt of a small African nation.

Having checked that he hadn't somehow been sent the bill for the whole street, Ivan decided that things must change at DunFishin and at the company, too. So how can Ivan use his computer to save money on his utility bills?

The main way is to search for information on cheaper suppliers, but there are things that Ivan can do directly with his PC to cut down on energy use. For a start, Ivan ought to look carefully at how he uses his PC's power-management options. It's better to use settings such as standby or hibernate than it is to leave the PC running all the time. In hibernate mode you can switch off the PC completely, although it takes slightly longer to wake up than from standby mode.

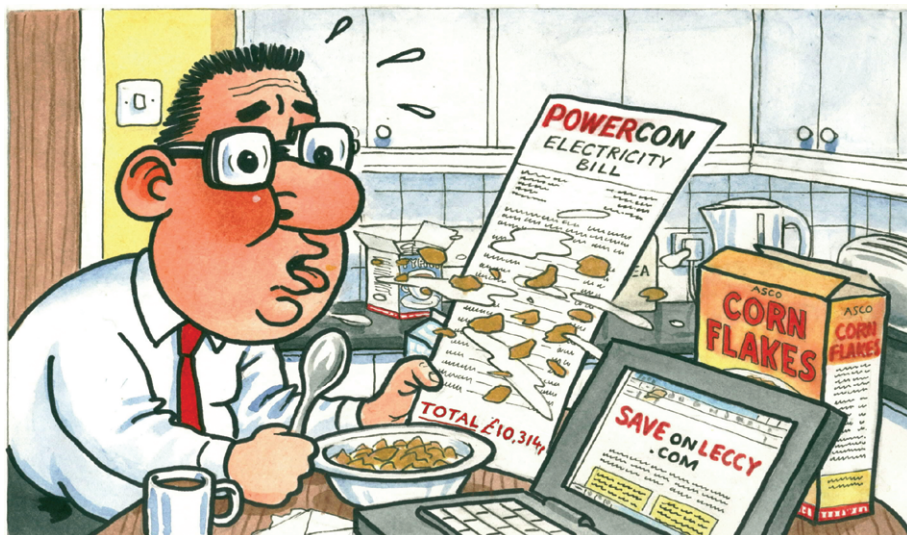
How much is saved by using standby mode?

It depends on the computer Ivan's using. As a rough guide, standby uses between 5W and 15W of power, compared to normal use of around 65W for the main unit and 80W for a CRT monitor. In context, if an average lightbulb uses around 75W, running a computer is equivalent to about one-and-a-half to two light bulbs. In standby it uses very little power, but it's still better to turn it off or hibernate it when Ivan goes home at night.

Is there any reason to have it running all the time? Does Ivan get enough faxes to warrant having a separate fax machine rather than a program running on his PC? Does the printer need to be left on all the time? Ivan's mum was right to switch things off when they weren't being used. It's a pain, but it will save money.

But surely modern equipment such as the PC uses only a smidgeon of power compared to most household appliances?

They're not bad, but Ivan still has to pay for them. Ivan can find a useful list that shows the power consumption of computers, monitors and printers, as well as everyday household appliances, at



www.esru.strath.ac.uk/eande/web_sites/01-02/re_info/cgi.htm.

This site provides downloadable spreadsheets that give power-consumption figures for normal use and standby modes for various electronic appliances. While they offer only average power-consumption figures, they should help Ivan work out what's costing him so much.

Good grief, according to those figures a laser printer uses almost as much power as a hairdryer! Ivan is switching to an inkjet for sure.

Well, that's when it's being used for printing rather than on standby, so Ivan might be overreacting a bit. If Ivan's thinking about changing his computer, though, it's worth bearing in mind the power use of the various options. For example, if he's choosing a display, an LCD monitor is more energy-efficient than the old-style CRT monitors. Manufacturers claim you can make savings of up to 90 per cent.

Whatever type of kit Ivan chooses, it's worth looking for devices that have been rated as energy-efficient. There are several labels, and you're most likely to find kit marked with the US Energy Star rating; the EU has Energy Saving Recommended, but it doesn't often appear on computer equipment. An Energy Star monitor needs to be able to power down automatically after a period of inactivity.

Ivan's not going to buy new kit just to save some electricity, but when he does he'll bear that in mind. What else can he do?

If Ivan hasn't done so already, he ought to use his computer to help him find the best deal on his

electricity supply. There are big differences in price between the various suppliers, and a quick check online can save Ivan a lot of money. An online search for "electricity prices comparison uk" will provide a list of plenty of websites where you can type in your current supplier, the amount of electricity you use per quarter, whether you use Economy 7 and so on.

Once you've supplied these details, you'll be shown a list of suppliers and how much it would cost per quarter or per year. Companies that offer this service are PowerBrokers (www.power-brokers.co.uk) and Energy Helpline (www.energyhelpline.com). USwitch (www.uswitch.com) compares not just gas and electricity but phone, broadband and credit card tariffs too.

Ivan could save £100 a year by switching his electricity supplier. Is there anything else he could do online?

The final possibility would be to look for energy efficiency grants that Ivan might be able to claim. The need to drive down CO₂ emissions means that there's money available to help people become more energy-efficient. The Energy Saving Trust (www.est.org.uk/myhome/gid) has a good search facility to guide you through various possibilities and show you the grants available in your area.

Ivan is a happier man. He's started shouting at people to turn lights off, he has put hibernate mode on all the computers so that they turn off when people have wandered away and he is going to apply for as many grants as he possibly can. Hopefully next quarter's bill won't be such a shocker.

Nigel Knowitall

If you want to get something done using software but are unsure how to do it, fear not — help is at hand from our resident expert, Nigel Knowitall



GETTING RID OF HYPERLINKS IN EXCEL

Q Our university's website has information on the people signed up for various courses, and I regularly need to take that information and put it into Excel. If I copy and paste it directly into the spreadsheet, all the email addresses are inserted as hyperlinks, as are the personal websites of the course attendees.

If I accidentally click on one of the email addresses, I end up with an email form opening so I can send them an email, but this isn't what I want. On the other hand, if I use Copy and Paste Special, the whole table goes into the first column and I lose the formatting.

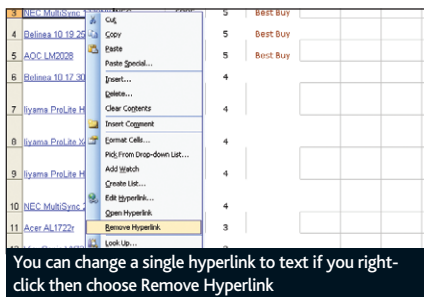
Excel Help tells me that to remove the links I must put a 1 into a blank cell, copy that, then hold down the Ctrl key while I select each hyperlink. Then I have to choose Paste Special. Finally, from the Operations in the Paste Special dialog, I must click Multiply and click OK.

This seems a perverse way of going about things, and it can be a pain to select each cell in turn this way. Is there an easier alternative?

Sam McKenzie

A The easiest way to do this is to create a short macro. The macro below assumes that the range from which you want to remove hyperlinks starts at cell A1:

```
Sub Macro1()  
ActiveSheet.Cells(1, 1).Select  
For Each c In ActiveCell.Current
```



You can change a single hyperlink to text if you right-click then choose Remove Hyperlink

```
Region.Cells  
c.Select  
Selection.Hyperlinks.Delete  
Next  
End Sub
```

First, this macro selects cell A1 using:

```
ActiveSheet.Cells(1, 1).Select
```

Next, the loop runs through all the cells in the current region — the area surrounding the current cell. It stops when it runs out of non-empty neighbouring cells. Each cell in turn is selected, and if there's a hyperlink in it then it is deleted.

If you wanted the macro to be more general, you could take out the line that reads:

```
ActiveSheet.Cells(1, 1).Select
```

You would then use the macro by selecting any cell in the block of data from which you want to remove hyperlinks, then running the macro.

USING TRIGGERS IN POWERPOINT

Q I'm using PowerPoint 2003, and I want to have animations that vary on a slide depending on the choice the viewer makes. If they choose option A they see one animation, and if they choose option B they see another. Some slides might have five or six different animations.

My problem is that if I add a custom animation, I'm given a number next to the box and the animation runs in the order of the numbers. I want PowerPoint to display animation E if the viewer chooses Option E first, not A to E in that order. Is there a way to do this without any programming?

Colin Small

A You can achieve your goal using triggers. A trigger is an interactive animation type that you can use to run a single animation or a series of animations, depending on which item was clicked. Triggers were only added in PowerPoint 2002, so readers who use an older version cannot do this.

To add a trigger, you need to set up the animation for the choice you're working on. From the pull-down menu on the animation label, select Timing. You'll see a dialog box with several choices; the one you want is Triggers. This offers you two choices. You need to choose the one called 'Start effect on click of'. You'll be able to pick which shape starts the effect when someone clicks on it. The number that appears beside the shape changes into a pointing finger, showing you this is a triggered effect shape.

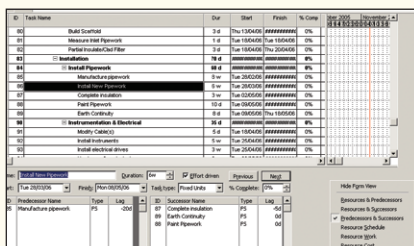
CREATING A SPLIT WINDOW VIEW

Q I use Microsoft Project and am always clicking on my tasks to see what successors and predecessors they have. I need to do this to see what my tasks are linked to, so I know, for example, what effect a delay would have on other tasks in the project. Is there a way of showing this information without opening tasks each time?

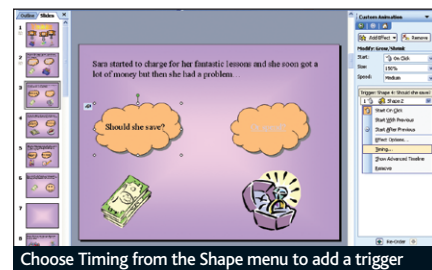
Grahame Waters

A You could change the view to a split window by choosing Split from the Window menu. Once you have two windows showing, place your cursor in the lower half of the window, right-click then choose the Predecessors and Successors view. From then on,

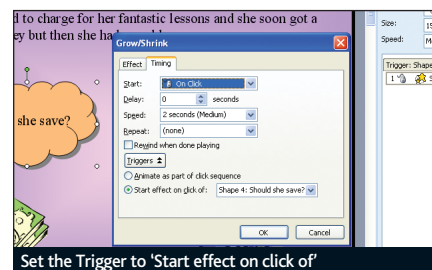
when you click on any task it automatically displays the predecessors and successors for that task in the lower half of your window, and you can edit them as necessary.



Choose Predecessors and Successors to see the linked tasks in Project



Choose Timing from the Shape menu to add a trigger



Set the Trigger to 'Start effect on click of'



REMOVING THE RECENTLY USED FILE LIST IN WORD

Q It's very useful to be able to see the documents that I've been working on in Word. To do this, I use the feature in the File menu, where you can see the most recently used files. I have mine set to the maximum of nine.

However, I share my computer with other people, and sometimes there are items on the list that I would prefer to remain confidential. Is there any way that I can delete the list without losing the functionality of the feature?

Simon Potter

A There are two ways to do what you want. The first method is to turn the feature off then back on. If you choose Tools, Options, and pick the General tab from the dialog that appears, you can untick the box labelled Recently Used File List to temporarily disable the feature.

You can then repeat the same steps to turn the list back on. However, this means it's obvious that the list has disappeared to anyone who uses it. A more discreet method would be to take note of the full list and the order it is in before you start, and then reconstruct it after you have finished editing.

If you would like a more automatic way of doing this, you can use something along the lines of the following two macros. The first macro finds out all the filenames and paths from the current list of recently used files:

```
Sub filelist()  
Set fs = CreateObject("Scripting.  
FileSystemObject")  
Set a = fs.CreateTextFile("c:  
\filelist.txt", True)  
For Each rfile In RecentFiles  
Fullname = rfile.Path & "\" &  
rfile.Name  
a.writeline Fullname  
Next rfile  
a.Close  
End Sub
```

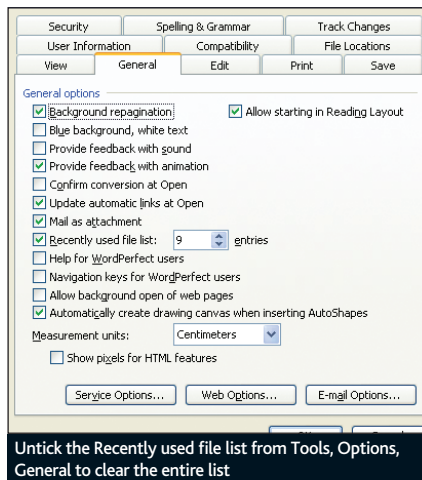
This macro creates a file called filelist in the root directory of drive C:. You'll probably want to put it somewhere a little less obvious, and call it something subtler too, but for simplicity's sake we'll stick with the root.

Rather than use the old-fashioned text file commands we've used the File System Object (FSO). This is a relatively new feature for VBA programmers, and will be useful for moving forward to other programming environments in future. It provides an object-based way of working with folders and files, and lets you use the object.method syntax with a good range of properties, methods and events to process folders and files.

Using the FSO object model means your applications can create, alter, move and delete folders or detect if particular folders exist and, if so, where. It also enables you to gain information about folders, such as their names, the date they were created or last modified and so on.

Once the file is created, a loop starts working through the list of files in the recently used file list. The start of this loop looks like this:

```
For Each rfile In RecentFiles
```



Untick the Recently used file list from Tools, Options, General to clear the entire list

Inside the loop, the macro gets the path and the filename, and joins them along with the \ separator to recreate the full filename. This is then written to the text file. Once all the files in the list have been worked through, the text file is closed and the macro ends.

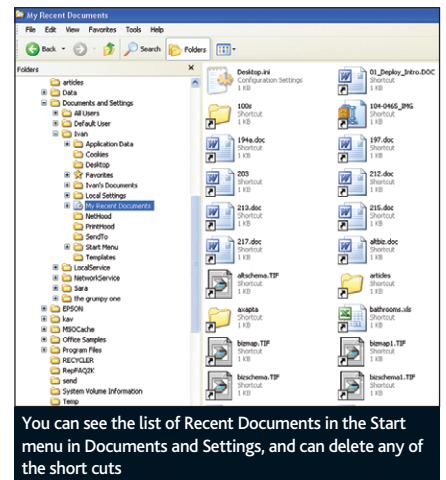
Run the above macro before opening the documents you want to remain hidden. Once you've finished your work, you can restore the file list as it originally appeared. To do so, run the following macro:

```
Sub filelistback()  
Dim fullnames(10)  
Set fs = CreateObject("Scripting.  
FileSystemObject")  
Set a = fs.openTextFile("c:  
\filelist.txt")  
i = 0  
While a.atendofstream = False  
i = i + 1  
fullnames(i) = a.readline  
Wend  
a.Close  
For j = i To 1 Step -1  
RecentFiles.Add Document:  
=fullnames(j)  
Next j  
End Sub
```

This macro is a bit more complicated because you don't have the same information when you're reading from a text file as you do with known entities such as the recent file list. In particular, you don't know how many lines there are to be read. It's also more complicated because you need to read the whole of the lines from the file then add them in reverse order to the file list to recreate it in the same order as existed originally.

This means that we have to start by creating an array to hold the list of names from the text file. The maximum length of the recently used file list is nine, so we have given the array a size of nine. This gives us one element 'spare' because arrays are counted from zero, but humans find it easier to start counting from one, so we have stuck with a size of nine.

Now we need to work through the text file reading one line at a time, and putting each line into our array. I've used the variable i as a counter for the place in the array where the new line should be stored temporarily. By adding one to it, each time a line has been added, the final value of i



corresponds to the number of filenames that were stored in the text file. Because we're using FSO rather than the more traditional Open statement for the text file, we can't use EOF to test when the end of the file is reached. Instead, the property to test is atendofstream.

Once all the values have been retrieved from the text file, we can repopulate the recent files list. We need to do this from the end of the array to the beginning, so the second loop goes from i to 1 in steps of minus one. Don't forget that you can make For loops jump forwards and backwards, and you don't need to have an increment of 1, or -1. You can have Step 3, Step -2 or whatever fits the needs of your application.

The body of the loop simply adds each full name from the array to the recently used file list and, at the end of the macro, the list is successfully put back as it was.

This doesn't remove the names of the documents from the Start menu's Documents list. You can simply clear this list by right-clicking on the Windows Taskbar. From there, choose Properties, Start Menu, Customize then choose Advanced and click Clear List.

If you want to extend the more sophisticated approach of putting the list back the way it was before you started writing your CV (or whatever it is that you want to keep hidden), you will find the recently used documents in a folder that is stored in your Documents and Settings folder. Use Windows Explorer to view the contents of your My Recent Documents folder. Ivan would find his in:

C:\Documents and Settings\Ivan Iwannado\
My Recent Documents

You'll find a full list of all the documents you've opened recently, along with information on web pages you've opened and any other files you've used. To remove a file from the list, simply delete it. You'll delete only the short cut, not the actual file, so you won't cause any damage. **CS**

CONTACT

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